

Steinbeck comes alive . . . almost

'Cannery Row' Nick Nolte Cinema World

The scene is a Monterey waterfront of the 1940's. Amidst the abandoned, rusty sardine factories lies a town of misfits and has-beens that reality has somehow passed by.

At the sound of a bugle call and the God-like voice of John Huston, a kaleidoscope of bizarre characters awaken to begin a day of surrealistic merrymaking.

This is "Cannery Row," a crazy town of down-and-out "floosies" and bums who coexist in such a fun atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation that is hard to believe, yet amusing to watch.

A combination of two John Steinbeck novels, "Cannery Row" and "Sweet Thursday," the film is a tribute to the soulful, searching characters filled with quiet pathos that Steinbeck is famous for.

Doc (Nick Nolte) is an offbeat ex-baseball player who finds refuge from a troubled past in a deadbeat town, while searching for the Ultimate Discovery in his work as a marine biologist. Suzy

(Debra Winger) is an ingenue drifter turned unsuccessful prostitute, a heart of gold floosie.

When these two meet, there is an instant attraction, but the rest of the film is spent in their trying to find a connection. Doc is too restrained and intellectual while Suzy is too extroverted, making for an abrasive attraction of opposites as they try to find a meeting point.

Winger and Nolte work well together, but it is Nolte who stands out as Doc. Steinbeck described Doc as "a guy that's wide open . . . a real guy with a window in him." Nolte plays that vulnerability with a quiet roughness that's very appealing.

With crazy situations like a frog round-up and a "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" costume party where everyone comes dressed as trees, "Cannery Row" is so far-fetched and off-beat that the viewer is forced to accept it because it all looks like so much fun. Ultimately, it is this craziness and kaleidoscope of characters that gives "Cannery Row" its charm, and the heart of Steinbeck's work.

by debbi roberts

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'Personal Best'

(Continued from page 6B)

for the competition, only to be told they couldn't compete. "Personal Best" gives this sad event only a passing footnote, as if it was too late to fix up the script, making for a lot of build-up and a jumbled ending.

Then there's the Eugene sequence. The most important scenes of the film were shot during the 1980 Olympic Trials at Mac Court with a limited amount of time. During part of the Olympic Trials, it rained, changing all the shooting conditions and making a profound impact on the movie's continuity. The audience sees some nice artsy shots of the rain, only to find the sky sunny and clear three shots later.

Another continuity problem presents itself in some irrelevant dialogue regarding Cahill's Indian heritage. People keep ask-

ing what percent Indian she is, which side is Indian, etc. with no visible tie-in to anything meaningful. This silly flaw in the script is just one more hurdle that the film gets hung up on.

One of Towne's major downfalls was in trying to show a reasonably realistic portrayal of women's athletics. By all reports, Towne failed miserably, showing instead a group of doped-up, partied-out, over-sexed athletes under the direction of a beer-guzzling, lecherous, impossible coach (played by Scott Glenn). Even a cameo appearance of Vic Atiyeh doesn't save the movie.

All in all, the movie starts out with an interesting idea, adds some great camera work, but gets hopelessly tripped up and finishes a dead last.

by matt meyer

FRISCO

(Continued from page 3B)

and said, "maybe next time you should try the Neapolitan Saut-eeed Squid."

"We wouldn't want to miss that, would we?" I said. I felt a sharp knee jab me under the table.

Once we got out of the city, the trip home was pretty quiet. We stopped for a nap when I started seeing the little white lines fly by with my eyes closed. My handy dandy little watch informed me it was 3:40. Classes started at 9:30 and we still had 110 miles to go. We'd need to get up at 6:30 to make it home in time to get ready for classes. I set my watch, and joined my wife in dreamland.

It seemed like five minutes later when the Revolutionary forces were attacking, the siren piercing in short blurts — I woke

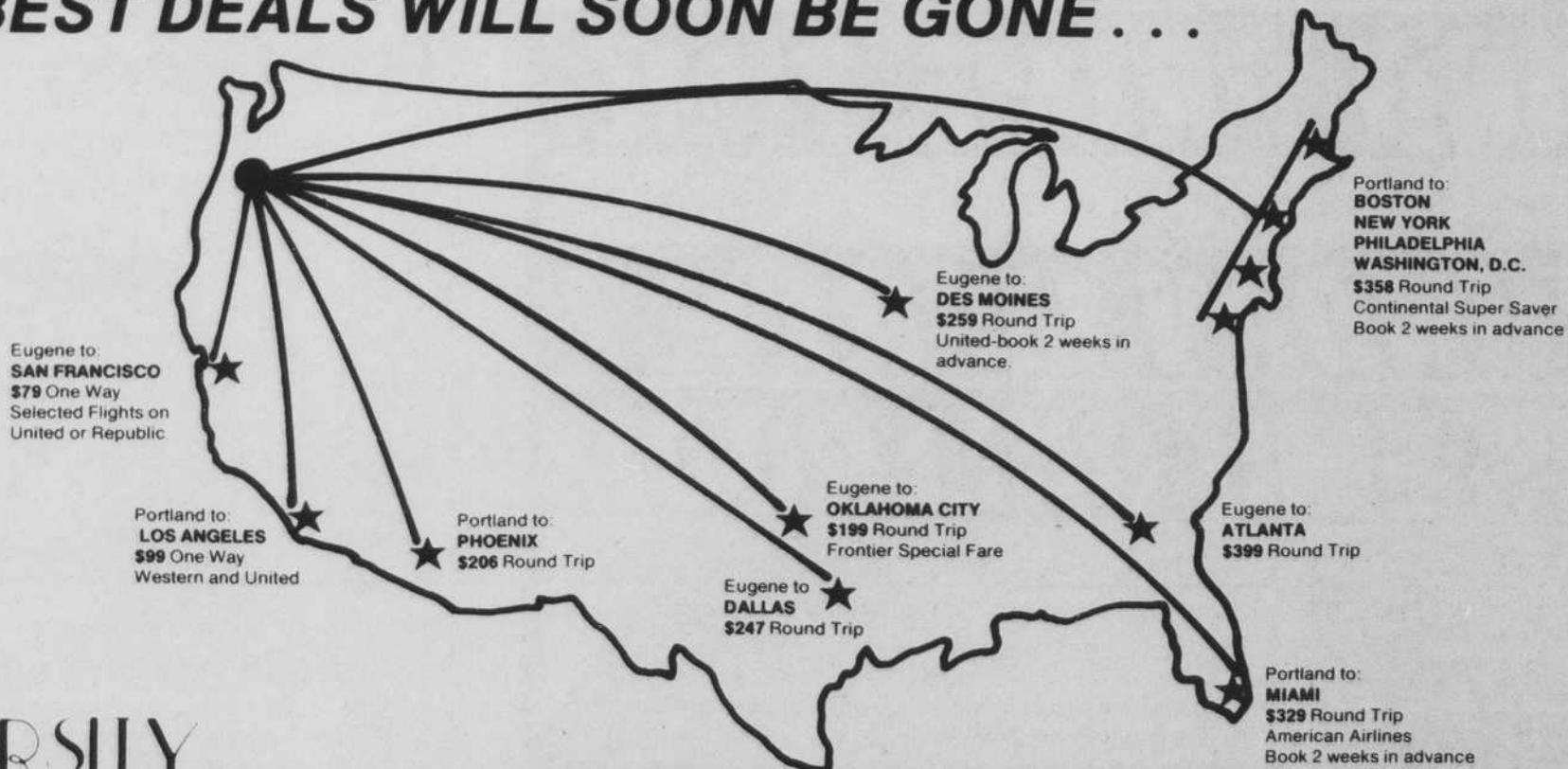
up, and finally found my watch where I had left it, hooked around the turn signal lever. "Menace to society, these stupid digital contraptions!" I grumbled.

Soon we were rolling through the gray hills south of Eugene. My wife was furiously rushing to get her homework done, and I watched as the eternal Oregon drizzle hit the windshield. The countryside grew more familiar as it grew lighter, and soon we found ourselves on Franklin Boulevard, heading towards our dreary little hole-in-the-wall.

"Isn't it great to be home?" my wife yelled from the shower. "Hurry, we've got to eat and get ready for school. Will you get breakfast ready?"

I grinned as I carefully poured the remaining Sicilian-style Squid from its cardboard container into a cereal bowl.

THE BEST DEALS WILL SOON BE GONE . . .



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